



# 2025 IMPACT REPORT

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## *Land Acknowledgement*

The Alberni Valley Food Security Society operates within the ancestral, unceded and traditional territory of the Hupačasath and Tseshah First Nations. We seek to increase our understanding of Indigenous food systems and respectfully acknowledge the keepers of this land.



# From AVFSS

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2025 was a year of strengthening roots and stewarding growth for the Alberni Valley Food Security Society. Building on the momentum of recent years, AVFSS focused on consolidating programs, deepening partnerships, and improving the systems that support community food security across the Alberni Valley.

From a record-breaking gleaning season to fully subscribed community garden plots and expanded school garden programming, this year demonstrated the power of collective effort. Volunteers, partners, staff, and board members showed up with care, commitment, and creativity—ensuring that local food reached local people.

Equally important, 2025 was a year of planning for longevity. The organization invested time in governance, financial sustainability, and long-term visioning, ensuring AVFSS can continue to grow with integrity and resilience. Together, we are building a food-secure future rooted in community, land, and shared responsibility.

From backyard fruit trees to school gardens and community events, AVFSS initiatives connected people to food, land, and one another—strengthening local resilience and celebrating abundance.



In food and community,

*AVFSS President - Byron Pugh*

# Our Work

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## *Our Vision*

A Food Secure Alberni Valley: When all people, at all times, have access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable and culturally appropriate foods, produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just.

**17,412**

pounds of  
local fruit  
gleaned



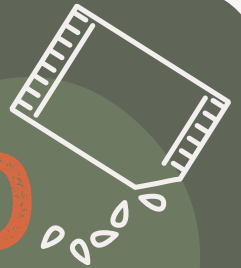
Community  
Garden  
plots filled

**17**



**370**

free seed packets  
& plants distributed



**640**

students  
engaged in  
AVFSS  
programming



**Our  
Year**

**1,715**



visits to  
local farms  
facilitated



**24%**

increase  
in AVFSS  
Membership

local organizations  
received gleaned  
fruit

**19**



**118,536**

AVFSS  
Facebook  
Visits

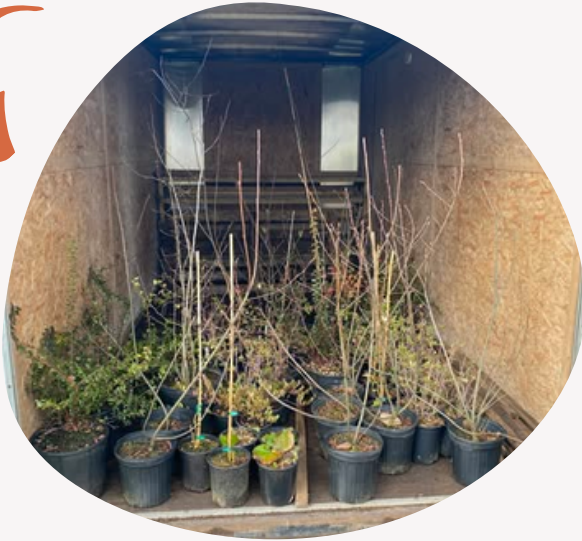




# Grow Local

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*Plant order arriving from  
Streamside Nursery*



The Grow Local initiative remained central to core learnings, reinforcing the value of embedding local food education within schools. Grow Local helped students and educators deepen their relationship with food and place—planting seeds not only in the soil, but in future generations of growers and food champions. AVFSS teamed up with the ACRD and Farm To School BC to revitalize three Pacific Rim Schools gardens, with grateful acknowledgement of funding through TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Throughout the year, AVFSS supported school gardens through hands-on workshops, an educator professional development day, and the distribution of soil amendments and signage to three schools across the district. This legacy project included planting native species to bring diversity, pollinator support and bountiful harvests to the school gardens.



*New medicinal garden planted at the  
Bamfield Community School*



Through a partnership with Cascadia Seaweed, AVFSS supported soil building at EJ Dunn School by delivering approximately 800 pounds of local seaweed. Students helped unload and incorporate the seaweed into newly developed beds, where it will improve soil health, add micronutrients, and support moisture retention—strengthening the garden for seasons to come.

*Seaweed Delivery to Amend Garden*



# The Gleaning Project

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The Gleaning Project was a cornerstone of AVFSS's impact in 2025, reaching new scale and visibility across the region. By connecting volunteers with homeowners who had surplus fruit, the program ensured that abundance was shared rather than wasted. Nearly one hundred gleans were completed during the season, recovering more than 17,000 pounds of local fruit. Harvests were shared among volunteers, host households, and community food programs, strengthening food access while fostering neighbourly connection.



*A garden harvest!*



Operational improvements—including a streamlined registration system, tree scouting forms, tracking systems, and volunteer coordination—allowed the program to grow sustainably. Beyond the numbers, the Gleaning Project continued to build relationships, reduce wildlife attractants, and demonstrate the power of collective care.

***This remarkable amount of gleaned fruit was made possible by the many volunteers and community members who went above and beyond throughout the season.***



# Dry Creek Community Garden

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*2025 Garden Slumber*

Dry Creek Community Garden (DCCG), continues to serve as a vibrant community space that supports connection, learning, and environmental stewardship. Managed by AVFSS, the garden remains a shared place for skill building, collaboration, and sustainable food production.

In 2025, DCCG marked an important chapter, with all garden plots fully rented for the growing season and a lease extension secured through 2028, providing long-term stability for this valued community space. The year included volunteer work parties, infrastructure upgrades, and renewed attention to governance and stewardship, strengthening both community engagement and garden operations.

As a place of learning, nourishment, and connection, the garden continued to reflect the values of collaboration and care at the heart of AVFSS' work.

**A big thank you to the City of Port Alberni for providing the garden site, renewing our three-year lease, and waiving water fees in support of community growing.**



*Getting ready for spring and the season ahead!*





# Community Events

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## *Seedy Saturday 2025*



AVFSS hosted the annual gathering for the Island Health Food Security Hubs. It was great to showcase and tour a couple of the local initiatives and connect with our Island Health counterparts from across Vancouver Island.

One of the main objectives of AVFSS is to create opportunities for learning, growth, and fostering a self-sufficient food system in the resilient Alberni Valley.

In 2025, AVFSS hosted the Seedy Saturday event, which achieved remarkable success, attracting over 600 attendees. The event featured 24 vendors, a dedicated area for children's activities, and a lineup of speakers.



## *Touring the Hupacasath Community Farm*

In 2025, AVFSS teamed up with the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District to host the 13th Annual Family Farms Day! This event allowed us to highlight some of our amazing farms and urban sites in the Valley, and we are thankful to the seven locations that welcomed the community and opened their doors.

This event offers a wonderful chance for people to engage with and support local agriculture while also finding inspiration for what they can cultivate in their own backyards.



## *Family Farm Day 2025*

# Other Offerings

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## *Edna Cox Bursary Recipient*



One of the main objectives of AVFSS is to create opportunities for learning, growth, and fostering a self-sufficient food system in the resilient Alberni Valley.

AVFSS would like to congratulate Hali Stafford, the 2025 recipient of the Edna Cox Social Justice Bursary! We applaud her interest and efforts in community development and local food security. Wishing Hali all the best in her bright future.

Advocacy is a large part of what AVFSS as we know that strong local food systems are key to building healthier, more resilient communities—especially as we face the challenges of a changing climate. We are grateful to see these priorities recognized at the provincial level.



## *Advocacy with our local politicians*

In 2025, AVFSS was incredibly fortunate to have Theresa Kingston facilitate an intensely valuable strategic planning process for the AVFSS organization. We are committed to updating and further defining our vision, goals and operational processes.

***Immense gratitude to Theresa Kingston, who guided us through this undertaking with expertise, understanding and authenticity.***



## *Formulating our Strategic Plan*



# Rooted in Tomorrow

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In 2025, AFSS continued to invest in systems-level work that supports long-term food security. This included participation in regional food security and emergency planning, advocacy within Official Community Plan processes, and collaboration with Island Health and regional partners.

In 2025, we delivered meaningful impact across our programs, including the successful gleaning of more than 17,000 pounds of fruit and vegetables for our community. At the same time, we took an honest look at how that work was carried out and recognized the need to ensure our programs remain sustainable for the organization and the people behind them.

In 2026, AVFSS will focus on strengthening our core programs rather than expanding into new ones. This means putting clear boundaries around our work, deepening the impact of what we already do well, and aligning our activities with our capacity and resources.

Our priorities for 2026 include:

- Ensuring core programs, such as gleaning and food education, operate within realistic and sustainable limits
- Building stronger systems, staffing, and volunteer support to reduce overextension
- Delivering fewer but more intentional programs, events, and advocacy efforts that align with our mission and values.

This approach reflects our commitment to long-term impact, organizational resilience, and the wellbeing of our community, staff, and volunteers. By focusing our energy where it matters most, AVFSS is positioning itself to continue serving the community in a way that is thoughtful, effective, and sustainable.



*Planning today, for tomorrow's harvest*



# Thank You

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The Alberni Valley Food Security Society extends deep gratitude to its volunteers, board members, staff, partners, funders, and community members. 2025 demonstrated what is possible when food security is approached collaboratively—with care for land, people, and future generations.